

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 INR-07 NSC-05 CIAE-00 RSC-01 /041 W

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R 221300Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9131

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 0922

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, SU

SUBJECT: SOVIET AMBASSADOR COMMENTS ON BREZHNEV'S HEALTH

1. AT A LUNCHEON I HOSTED JANUARY 21 FOR SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY, AMBASSADOR RYZHOV TOLD ME THAT HE HAD PERSONALLY SPOKEN TO SOVIET GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV IN MOSCOW ON DECEMBER 23. ACCORDING TO RYZHOV, BREZHNEV SEEMED IN GENERALLY GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRITS ALTHOUGH HE MENTIONED THAT HE WAS SOMEWHAT TIRED AS A RESULT OF HIS EXCEEDINGLY BUSY SCHEDULE DURING THE FALL. BREZHNEV STATED THAT HE INTENDED TO TAKE A WORKING VACATION OF SEVERAL WEEKS IN THE CRIMEA AT AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY WHICH, THE AMBASSADOR INDICATED, WOULD EXPLAIN REPORTS OF HIS RECENT ABSENCE FROM PUBLIC VIEW. RYZHOV ALSO MENTIONED THAT HIS WIFE HAD SUBSEQUENTLY SEEN BREZHNEV ON JANUARY 6 AND HAD STATED THAT HE APPEARED TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH.

2. IN A MANNER APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO PROVE THAT BREZHNEV IS STILL VERY MUCH AT WORK, RYZHOV TOLD ME THAT HE HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED A LETTER DATED JANUARY 8 FOR DELIVERY TO PRIME MINISTER MORO SIGNED BY BREZHNEV CONCERNING THE INVITATION (EMBTel 17670) FOR BREZHNEV TO VISIT ITALY. IN HIS LETTER, BREZHNEV REPORTEDLY INDICATED THAT HE WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO MAKE THE TRIP BUT THAT HE IS NOT NOW IN A POSITION TO SET A DATE. (THE MFA'S SOVIET DESK OFFICER HAD ALREADY INFORMED US OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE BREZHNEV LETTER AND HAS INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO SHOW US A COPY.)

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3. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH ME AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS,

THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR AND OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT AT THE LUNCHEON DOWNPLAYED WESTERN PRESS REPORTS OF BREZHNEV'S ILLNESS AND OF DISSENSION WITHIN SOVIET LEADERSHIP CIRCLES. THEY EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT THE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO A POLICY OF DETENTE WITH THE US WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED DESPITE THE RECENT SETBACK RESULTING FROM CONGRESSIONAL ADOPTION OF THE TRADE ACT. VOLPE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** HEALTH, POLITICAL SITUATION, PARTY LEADERS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** greeneet  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Review Authority:** greeneet  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 04 JUN 2003  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SOVIET AMBASSADOR COMMENTS ON BREZHNEV'S HEALTH  
**TAGS:** PFOR, IT, SU, (BREZHNEV, LEONID I)  
**To:** STATE MOSCOW  
**Type:** TE  
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